



# Athelney Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 100672  
**Local Authority** Lewisham  
**Inspection number** 295679  
**Inspection dates** 22–23 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Robert Lovett HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Athelney Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		London
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11		SE6 3LD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8697 2945
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	352	<b>Fax number</b>	020 8695 6099
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Irene Cleaver
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 September 2005		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Athelney is a larger than average primary school which serves an area of significant economic disadvantage. More than three times the national average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. A small minority of pupils are the early stages of learning English. An above average proportion of pupils joins and leaves the school at other than the normal times.

The last inspection made the school subject to special measures and this is the third monitoring inspection since then. The interim headteacher has been in post since October 2005 and is contracted to the school until the end of August 2007. The school is part of the London Challenge to improve teaching and learning and raise standards.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Athelney is a satisfactory and improving school with a good capacity to continue to improve.

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Behaviour is good and parents say it has improved significantly. Pupils and parents particularly like the fact that good behaviour is recognised. Pupils say they like the transparency of the school's systems for encouraging good behaviour as one said 'we know where we stand'. The school does a good job of helping pupils settle in, quickly establishes clear expectations and helps develop pupils' social and collaborative skills well. It successfully promotes a positive and caring community.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum with a good range of visits and visitors. There are a number of clubs and activities available for older pupils outside of normal school hours and these support the curriculum well. There are fewer opportunities for younger pupils and there are plans to broaden the overall range of after school clubs. There is good additional support outside of the normal school day for the most able and for vulnerable pupils.

The interim headteacher gives very good leadership. In a short time, her clear focus on raising standards has had a real impact on how well pupils are doing. As a result, standards have risen in English, mathematics and science, although they remain below average. During their time in the school most pupils make the progress one would expect.

The Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Pupils learn to play and work together well and begin to develop the important social and language skills which will help them as they grow older.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and in some there is a real sense of the fun of learning. While teaching is satisfactory overall there is some inconsistency between classes and across subjects. Because learning is not always well matched to pupils' needs some do not make as much progress as they might. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for and looked after and feel safe in school. The school has been successful in improving punctuality and attendance. However, despite attendance figures for the start of this academic year showing an improving picture, attendance remains below the national average.

### What the school should do to improve further

\* Ensure that all teaching is at least good in order to raise standards in English, mathematics and science.\* Ensure learning is better matched to the needs of all pupils, particularly the most and least able.\* Improve attendance.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils enter the Nursery with standards that are below national expectations; their language and communication skills are particularly low. Pupils make satisfactory progress and attainment remains below average by the time they leave the Reception class.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and while they do best in mathematics, by the end of Year 2 standards overall remain below average. In 2006 the number of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics rose but too few pupils reached the higher Level 3. Pupils currently in Year 2 are making good progress with their writing.

During their time in Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress. The school's data indicates that in the 2006 national tests standards rose considerably in English, mathematics and science so that the proportion achieving the nationally expected Level 4 in English and mathematics is likely to be broadly average. Standards rose most in mathematics, where the number of pupils attaining Level 4 rose by 13%. Pupils make most rapid progress in Years 5 and 6.

While standards overall are satisfactory, not enough pupils are reaching the higher Level 5 so that some more able pupils are not doing as well as they should. The school has set challenging targets for 2007, including for Level 5, and its pupil tracking systems suggest it is well placed to achieve these. However, the achievement of more able pupils throughout the school should be a continuing focus for school improvement.

Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress but some could make more progress if work was more closely matched to their needs. Pupils who speak a first language other than English also make satisfactory progress and achieve as well as other pupils.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is good. The school promotes 'core values' such as independence and unselfishness particularly well. Pupils say they enjoy school and work hard in lessons. The school successfully promotes the importance of developing good relationships.

Pupils' satisfactory understanding of basic skills helps prepare them for their next stage of education, as does the emphasis on teamwork and learning with a partner. The school's involvement in joint projects for some more able pupils extends their skills in research and financial planning very well. Pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle but the school acknowledge that this is an area that could be further developed.

The school is successful in providing a positive and caring community. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe because adults value what they do and say. The recent visit from

a Local Authority representative, who worked with the pupils, resulted in traffic calming measures being introduced outside the school. Pupils are aware that some people are not as fortunate as them and support both local and international charities. Their contribution to both the school and wider community is good. Although the school has been successful in improving punctuality and attendance, attendance remains below the national average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

While there is some outstanding teaching, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Speaking and listening are promoted very well through the many opportunities for pupils talk to each other about their work and learn together. Classrooms are bright, calm and orderly. The good management of classes means little time is wasted and teachers plan the long two-hour sessions with enough variety to keep pupils well motivated. Relationships are very good; pupils work hard and enjoy their lessons. The work of the learning support assistants is unobtrusive and supports learning well. Good quality marking helps pupils understand how they can improve their work. There are examples of good planning to meet the needs of individual pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and to challenge some of the more able. However, this is inconsistent. In some lessons work is not sufficiently well matched to the different learning needs of groups of pupils, such as the more and less able, so that they do not always make as much progress as they could.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. Nursery and Reception provision is satisfactory and contributes appropriately to the progress children make. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the requirements for the National Curriculum and for religious education are firmly in place. The amount of teaching time exceeds national guidelines with an appropriate emphasis on speaking and listening, literacy across the curriculum and mathematics. Science is less well developed than English and mathematics. Provision for art is good and makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. In Year 5 and Year 6 there is sensitive and timely teaching about personal hygiene, sex and drugs education. A variety of events and visitors to school enrich learning well. Older pupils have residential experiences and all pupils experience a good range of visits to support their learning.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The care and welfare of pupils is good. Academic guidance has improved and is satisfactory. The headteacher has led the development of improved procedures for

health and safety well. Pupils' personal needs are cared for to a high standard. Support for looked after pupils and the health care of pupils with physical disabilities is good. Child protection arrangements are robust. The inclusion programme is well led and managed and there are good links with external professional agencies. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well. Procedures to assess and record small steps in progress in English, mathematics and science have improved. Teachers are developing their skills at setting targets in these core subjects for their classes, but the setting of targets for individual pupils is at an earlier stage. It is difficult for the school to identify clearly the pupils at risk of underachieving from the assessment information as it is currently stored. Pupils are well supported as they move from Year 2 to Year 3 and on transferring to secondary school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The interim headteacher is providing very good leadership. She has a clear focus on raising standards and in a short time has had a real impact on how well pupils are doing. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and the two assistant headteachers who share her vision for the school. They work towards the common goal of school improvement with energy and determination. The leadership team has implemented a rigorous programme of lesson observations and these are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

The school has a good commitment to the professional development of all staff and is beginning to match training well to the needs of individuals and the school. The newly constituted middle management team has both the commitment and enthusiasm to contribute substantially to school improvement. The chair of governors provides committed and well informed leadership. Because it is now more fully informed the governing body is better able to hold the school to account. School improvement has been well supported by the Local Authority.

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses very well. It has produced a good plan to raise achievement and has identified appropriate actions intended to bring this about. Because of this, and because the leadership is already raising standards, the school has a good capacity to improve. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I would like to begin by thanking you, on behalf of all the inspectors who visited your school recently, for helping us with our inspection. Your views were very interesting and played an important part in ensuring we got to know your school well.

We think you attend a satisfactory and improving school. Because the headteacher and other adults know what the school is good at and what it still needs to get better at we are confident the school will continue to improve. We think your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. You told us you are proud of your school and we can see that in the pride you take in your achievements and the way you care for the school and each other. One of the other inspectors came away from a meeting with some of you and said she thought you were a credit to the school!

We think the headteacher leads the school very well and that the deputy and assistant headteachers, and the school's governors give her good support.

This was the third time I have visited your school and I can see Athelney has improved a lot but we believe you can all do even better. Here are some of the ways we are asking the school to help you learn more; \* Standards are rising in English, mathematics and science. However, some of you could be doing even better and we have asked the school to look at how it can make sure this happens. You can help with this by letting your teachers know if you find work too easy or too hard. \* Some of the teaching in the school is good and some is outstanding. We have asked the school to try to make sure it is all as good as the best so that standards rise even higher. \* Attendance has improved and almost all of you now get to school on time. In spite of this improvement attendance is still not as good as it should be and you can help by trying to make sure you miss as little school as possible.

This was probably the last time I will visit you but I look forward to hearing how well Athelney Primary School is doing and hope you all have a great end to the term!

R. P. Lovett Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools